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MR. SULLIVAN'S
DISCOURSE
BEFORE THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE.



INTRODUCTORY

D I S C O U R S E,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,

AT BOSTON, AUGUST 22, 1833.

BY WILLIAM SULLIVAN,
ONE OF THE OFFICERS OF THE INSTITUTE.

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DISCOURSE.

It is believed, that the members of an Association are now addressed, whose chief object in associating was, to devote their united efforts to making the members of society as intelligent and happy as they can be. I have, therefore, supposed, that if I am capable of performing the service implied in accepting the honor conferred on me, I could not do it more usefully, than by showing, as well as my humble means will permit, how intelligence and happiness may be promoted.

As the words *intelligence* and *happiness* may have different meanings, in different minds, it may be proper, first, to explain the sense in which they are used on this occasion. Intelligence, in its most comprehensive sense, may mean all the knowledge which the human mind can attain to. But as it is, for the present purpose, to be used in reference to all the members of society, it is used as meaning that information which each member should have in the station which he may hold, whether it be public, or private; prominent, or humble. Every one, of whatever station, has rights and duties. If he conduct himself well and usefully to himself, and others, in all his relations, he may be entitled to be considered intelligent; if he conduct himself perversely, or ignorantly, and make a bad use of life for himself;

and is a cause of trouble and vexation to others, he cannot be so considered. Intelligence, then, implies knowledge of motives, means, and ends, to good purposes. One may be adroit, cunning, and fraudulent, and may well understand how to accomplish bad purposes ; but he should not be called intelligent, since he either knows not what life was given for, or he foolishly misapplies the gift.

The word happiness will be used, on this occasion, as meaning, freedom from bodily pain, from self-reproaching retrospect, and from disquieting apprehensions of the future ; and the enjoyment of all pleasures which occasion no suffering, penitence, or regret.

If these words be so understood, one need not hesitate to say, that the American people are very far from being as intelligent, and as happy, as they might be. With respect to those of them who have made much progress in adult age, their opinions and habits, if essentially wrong, are not likely to be changed for the better, by any course of instruction. If there be room for improvement, we must devote our services to the young. In the present, and probable condition of the American people, children are an object of intense interest to every person, who is capable of rightly understanding, and duly estimating the means of individual, domestic, social, and political happiness. We who are now beyond the middle age of life, ought not to forget, in what a little moment, they who are now children will occupy our vacated stations. Nor ought we to forget, that if we wish well to them, and hope to be favorably remembered, we have some sober duties to perform while the sand of the hour-glass still continues to run. Every patriotic and benevolent man should feel, that he lives in the long past, in the active present, and in the far-coming future. He is, what those who went before him, have made him to be ; those who are coming, will be what he, and his co-agents, make of them. Society may be likened to a long flowing river. Some parts are continually mingling with the insatiable ocean ; others, disappear by early evaporation ; while other parts are continually coming in from fountains, and tributary streams. If

these renewals of the ceaseless river be turgid, unhealthy, and noxious, surely the whole extent of the gathered waters, must soon have the same character.

In treating of the proper course of public instruction, in our country, it must be remembered, we have proudly declared to the world, that we need no kings, no lords, no military force to govern us ; that we can make, and can live, under our own laws, peaceably administered by rulers of our own choosing ; that we need no established priesthood, no creeds of human invention ; but that we can, and will, worship the Creator in sincerity and truth, under the guidance of pure and enlightened teachers of our own selection.

This is glorious freedom ; and worth all the precious treasure, and noble daring, which it cost. But, what has been obtained ? *Nothing but the power to act.* The talent has been confided to us. Shall we use it, or hide it in a napkin ? Shall we do far worse with it ; shall we prove ourselves unworthy of the trust, and purchase for ourselves the just charge of ingratitude to predecessors, and the contempt of followers ? Whoever will look into the future of this great and increasing country, even for a few years, with an eye prepared for the inspection, by having observed human nature, as it has hitherto shown itself in the history of the world, will be startled into the inquiry, *what are the duties of the age in which I live ; and what are my own duties ?*

In the aspect of the present, there are two facts, which will force themselves on the notice of any observing mind ; the one is, that with all our liberty to act as we please, for our own good, we are far from having the benefits which education can impart ; and the other is, that we are in danger of losing the good we now have. If education be designed to make the members of society intelligent and happy, how does it happen, that after all that has been accomplished, this is still a pains-taking, anxious, and troublesome world, to little purpose, among a large proportion of all who dwell in it ? Why is it so ; and what is to be done to make existence better ?

Whatsoever answers my limited means permit me to give to such questions, will be found in an attempt to answer another question, *In what manner should an American youth be educated?*

This is a question, in which a small portion of the busy and active members of society, consider themselves to be interested. If one can find satisfactory excuses for his neutrality, in all matters relating to the welfare of his fellow-men, he does not deserve the privilege, and the honor, of being an American citizen, if he is resolved to take no part, nor interest, in the instruction of the young.

It is supposed that the proper education of an American youth, may comprise ; 1. whatsoever pertains to his person, as an animal being ; 2d. whatsoever belongs to the development and use of his understanding ; 3d. whatsoever belongs to his motives, and to the object of all the acts, which he may justly do ; 4th. whatsoever is involved in the duties of a citizen, in a free popular government.

The mere animal enjoyment of life, is far from being well understood in this country. This subject better deserves an appropriate treatise, than a short remark, which is all that this occasion allows. In this respect, we might be, with our abundant means, far more intelligent and happy than we are. If those benevolent persons who give a portion of their time to teaching in Lyceums, would discourse on the common-sense practical philosophy of life, they would do far more good than they can do by discoursing, ever so wisely, on poetry, astronomy, railroads, and steam-engines. How to eat, how to sleep, how to labor, what air to breathe, how to be dressed, and how to be cleanly, concern every man, woman, and child ; for all these go to health, without which intellectual pleasures are of little worth.

It is believed that there are lasting and painful infirmities, which begin in the school-room. It is a convenience, and a relief, to a busy mother, to send her children to school, for several hours in the day. She considers them safe while so employed ; nor only so, they are getting learning, and preparing to get a living. But at this tender age, while the bones are hardening, and

the delicate structure of the human frame is easily deranged, it is more than probable, that long continued *sitting*, lays the foundation for diseases which show themselves in after life, and occasion affliction to the child, and cost and pain to parents. The learning that may be acquired, in these early years, can be no compensation for such evils. It would be far better, for parent and child, to have good schools for *playing*, as well as learning, during the early years of infancy. The natural athletic action of the human system, has no tendency to deform, or enfeeble it; while the tedious confinement of the school-room is certain to do both. All that is contended for, is, that there should be a rational intermixture of bodily action, and mental employment for children, as mutually auxiliary in preserving health, and in acquiring learning; and however common such thoughts may be, they cannot be too often expressed until they are carried into practical and general effect.

Of the schools which come next to those for the very young, I have no information, or experience, in teaching, or discipline, which would justify me in expressing any opinions. It would seem reasonable, as learning may be so useful, profitable, and pleasant, that all associations with the means of acquiring it, should be made as pleasant as they can be. And this, not only for the happiness of childhood, but to induce the pursuit of information, as a benefit, and not as a task, in more advanced years. It is well known to some who are present, that many years ago, the recollections of *school years* were as little pleasant as any in the course of life. It may be, and it is believed to be, far different now; and that the lesson and the birch, are not now, as formerly, familiar associates. It is seen, that experienced and intelligent minds are busy in discerning and applying the best means of stimulating young minds, to use and develop their powers. It remains perhaps to be proved, by repeated experiments, whether kind treatment, persuasion, familiar conversation, occasional explanation, and rewards, are the best stimulants to intellectual exertion, or whether the preceptor must be despotic, in his own little empire, to make good scholars. Such matters must be referred to the deci-

sion of the humane, and experienced, in the difficult duty of unfolding the very varied and even strongly contrasted capacities of early age.

The establishment of schools uniting intellectual pursuits, and mechanical labor, is said, by some judicious persons, to be an object which deserves the immediate attention of our community. This can be effected but in one of three modes, as it involves considerable expense. It must be done by generous donations, by investment made with a view to gaining a revenue from it, or by appropriation of public money by the legislature. When the powers which have been given by the people to the law making authority, really embracing, as they do, every thing which ought to be done for the public welfare, are taken into view, it would seem, especially in this state, that much less is done, than might be. It is to be hoped that it will be discerned, how profitably and honorably the legislative power might be exercised for the promotion of intelligence; and that it will be an admitted truth, and practically applied, that whatsoever Americans have, that is worth having, will be worth still more, from the diffusion of knowledge.

If this spirit should be found to influence the public councils of this and other states, it is probable, that another public improvement may be expected. There is a space to be filled, one would think, between the common school and colleges. Academies, in part, occupy this space for females. But there is a numerous class, who constitute the strength of society, engaged in agriculture, mechanical, and other employments. On this class, no small portion of individual and general prosperity, essentially depends. They become, in the usual course of affairs, jurymen, town-officers, legislators, referees, executors, administrators, and members of many associations. The common school does not furnish this class with the full instruction which it would be convenient and useful for them to have, as well for themselves, as in a public view. Collegiate education is not desired by them, nor attainable, consistently with their engagements. In general, they are sufficiently ambitious to desire, and successful in obtaining,

the information they need. If the sphere of the common schools were enlarged, or some appropriate seminary were established, so as to meet what are supposed to be wants, among this portion of our citizens, it would be a proper and useful improvement in general education.

Admit that all our schools, as they now exist, and all others which have been mentioned, if established, answered the purposes intended, they would only qualify young persons to commence the getting of a living, and to acquire property, as though the sole purpose of this life were to get, and to use, to keep, and die possessed of, such things as can be weighed, measured and counted, or valued by money. It is not perceived, that it makes any part of the course of education, to teach *how to live, or for what to live*. Is it wise or consistent with human capacity, to limit education to the mere purpose of getting this world's goods, and to exclude all instruction as to the uses to which they should be applied, and as to their true value in comparison with other attainments? It is not assumed that property is, in general, misused among us, nor intended that the honorable industry which is enriching this country, should be laid aside or interrupted. No doubt this industry is conclusive proof of national welfare, as far as it goes. It is the source of the noble charities of which our citizens may be justly proud, since nearly all of these come from private donations, and not from the public chest. Passing by many cases, which might be mentioned, we may select, with pride and pleasure, the recent munificence of one of our citizens, in aiding to bestow a new sense on those whom nature seems to have neglected, and to restore a sense to those whom misfortune has bereaved.* Such sensibility to the wants of

* The gift of the Honorable THOMAS H. PERKINS, of an estate in Pearl Street, Boston, valued at thirty thousand dollars, as an Asylum for the Blind. Fifty thousand dollars were contributed, within sixty days, to constitute a fund for the same object. This is but one of the many similar instances of this gentleman's use of money, who seems to understand the important distinction between being *almoner* for one's self, and leaving charitable appropriations to the ministry of executors and trustees.

others, sheds a glorious lustre on our land. It is not contended, that the manner in which property is acquired, or used, is wrong, but that the education which qualifies one for no more than to acquire property, merely for its own sake, is not that education which qualifies any human being to be intelligent and happy. For, let it be supposed that young men are as well instructed as they now can be, in our schools and seminaries, that agriculture is well understood, and that every acre of ground is as well cultivated as it can be ; that the public roads are as good as they can be ; and that rail roads and canals exist, wherever they can be profitably used ; that all the mill power in the country is well applied ; that foreign commerce is prosperous ; and every sort of industry as productive, as free competition will allow. Let us also suppose, that we frequently hear of obscure villages becoming important towns, and inconsiderable towns, populous cities. Let us assume correspondent comforts, conveniences and luxuries ; that population is everywhere increasing ; that the interests of learning are attended to ; that pauperism is diminished ; intemperance suppressed ; and crime of rare occurrence. This would be considered a picture of brilliant national prosperity. Could anything more be asked for in this life, and what people could be more substantially blessed ?

At this day, the people of the United States are not afar off from the reality of this picture. And yet in the absence of all sickness and bodily infirmities, how many grievous heartaches are there in this seemingly happy land. How much misery in the cities ; how much mental suffering in every town and village. How many toiling after what they cannot gain, and ought not to gain if they could ; and which would be found dissatisfying and empty, if success were sure to follow effort. How many are there who have festering troubles at the heart, which they keep to themselves, or trust only to the confidence of tried and mutual friendship. How many are there, surrounded with all that seems essential to happy life, and who are really objects of envy, who, nevertheless, feel that this is a sad and wearisome world, and not

worth coming into for the good it gives, however reluctant they may be to leave it. If these things be so, are they ordained so to be, by man's Creator ; or do they arise from some other cause ? One would be slow to believe, that the Author of this well ordered and beautiful universe, and of the human mind, and of the power and interest to use it for the best purposes, has made such a state of things unavoidable, at all events, to the best condition of the human race. It seems more probable that we are at fault, and that we have not yet made all the progress towards a happy earthly life, of which we are capable.

Shall one venture to say, in such an assembly as this, that our systems of education are essentially defective ? The supposed defect does not lie in the want of such instruction as enables the members of society to get a living, and to acquire property ; but in this, that it is not adapted to make life as happy as it might be. If we glance over the attainments derived from education, it is believed, that the supposed defect will appear. Reading, writing, and arithmetic, are universally deemed to be essential. The common business of society could not go on without these. But the most accomplished persons in these attainments are quite as likely as those who know nothing of them, to find this a very troublesome sort of world.

Then something more is needed than this sort of schooling, to make this a comfortable and pleasing state of being. Add, then, the most accurate knowledge of grammar, of geography, of history, of mathematics, of natural philosophy ; add, also, as many languages as one can master, and to these add the skill which entitles one to highest distinction in some one of the departments of industry, whether mechanical, scientific, or professional. Add to these voluntary unbought suffrage, to the highest stations, and to all these attainments, good health. So qualified, so gifted, and so fortunate, why should not one be at ease, and in happiness ? Let us sound the heart of any one who comes nearest to all this, and hearken to the response. Does any one doubt what it will be ? How near will it come to this : 'Tis a troublesome, and a weary

world to live in ; full of disappointments, vexations, and sorrows ! Such dissatisfied man, it may be said, has not been disciplined in philosophy ; he ought to know, that it is such a world as he takes it to be, and that the Creator meant it should be so ; and that he should live in it accordingly. Or, he does not understand the world, and knows not how to live in it. Then furnish him with philosophy, and make him wise in the use of it. Let him have the best sort which the wisest minds of Greece, in its most splendid age could furnish. This was the creed of one of the best classes of that age. ‘Pleasure, or pain, is the measure of what is good, or evil, in every object of desire, or aversion. However, pleasure ought not in every instance, to be pursued, nor pain avoided ; but reason is to compare, and distinguish, the nature and degree of each, that the result may be a wise choice of what may appear to be, on the whole, good. That pleasure is the first good, appears from the inclination which every animal, from its first birth discovers, to pursue pleasure, and avoid pain ; and is confirmed by the universal experience of mankind, who are excited to action on no other principle than the desire of avoiding pain, and obtaining pleasure. Pleasure is of two kinds : one consisting in a state of rest, in which body and mind are free from pain ; the other arising from an agreeable agitation of the senses, producing a correspondent emotion in the soul. Upon the former of these, the enjoyment of life chiefly depends. Happiness may, therefore, be said to consist in bodily ease, and mental tranquillity. It is the office of reason to confine the pursuit of pleasure within the limits of nature, so as to attain this happy state, which neither resembles a standing pool, nor a rapid torrent, but is like a gentle stream, that glides smoothly and silently along.’

This may have been very good philosophy for its time. But even then it could have been applied only to one man in many thousands. It could not have had any application to laborers, warriors, poets, painters, sculptors, and ambitious politicians, any more than it now applies to farmers, manufacturers, merchants, lawyers, divines, physicians, political partizans, and patriots. The

day is gone by, in which happiness is found solely in bodily ease, and mental tranquillity. These are inconsistent with the modern action of the world. For without action, no man will pretend that there can be any approach to happiness. This philosophy places the highest happiness in idleness. Modern experience shows, that inaction is man's most intolerable state. Certainly, then, in our busy country, philosophy has no tendency to console one for the burthens, vexations and the distresses of life. It seems necessary, therefore, to find something better than the best philosophy of the Greeks, out of which to make human life pleasant.

As man is left to act as he sees fit, and has proved himself capable of bettering his condition, through all the long distance which lies between barbarism, and his present advancement, it seems reasonable to believe, that he may go still further; and that all the troubles which he experiences (except in the operation of the general laws of nature) arise from his own ignorance, or perversion. This is the more probable, because there is no want of rules for the action of human life, nor doubt of their soundness, authority, or sanction. The error lies, it is believed, in some deficiency in impressing these rules on youthful minds. We tell a youth what a wicked world it is, and how many wicked people there are in it, and we terrify him with distant and unintelligible punishments. We do not teach him the beauty, the excellence, and fitness of virtue, to make this a pleasant life. Probably not one youth in a hundred has any such systematic teaching how to attain to the best state of being, as he has in the art of getting money. Health and strength are the first objects, and it is surely a weakness to covet sympathy for the feebleness of the body. It is believed that no instruction is addressed to one's reason in early life, on the causes of losing, nor on the proper means of preserving, the bodily powers. The advantages of truth, justice, and industry are not brought within the notice of children, though they may be severely punished for falsehood, fraud, and idleness. The uses and the pleasures of prudence, humanity,

benevolence, generosity, and sympathy, are not objects of instruction, though improvidence, selfishness, and meanness, may be sometimes chastised or reproached. The inestimable treasure of a pure and consoling conscience is a matter clearly within a child's comprehension ; but of this he rarely hears, during all his childhood ; while he is very sure to feel a vindictive sorrow from being charged with guilt. The little extent to which moral teaching goes, seems to be, to tell a child of faults and crimes, to threaten the punishment of them, and to make a festering enmity in his heart, by executing the threat. It is not believed that there is a natural propensity to evil in children, which must be whipped out of them. It is far more probable, that most children may, by kindness, gentleness, and persuasion, be made to comprehend the beauty and utility of a natural and pure morality. It is far more probable that children can be made so to comprehend, than that adults can, who commonly first hear that there may be such things, after they have been steeped in worldly experience. Should a child be told before hand, that he can do wrong ; and when he does wrong, would not the best correction be to make him fully comprehend the advantages of doing right ? Suppose that all the members of society were so instructed in the real good of doing right, that they spoke only the truth, and were temperate, just, benevolent, forbearing, kind-hearted, and industrious, would society come to an end ? Suppose the desired things of this life, and the objects of distinction, now so zealously pursued, were justly and not vainly and foolishly estimated, would the inducements to productive industry cease ? Suppose that all the members of society had learned in infancy that they would promote their own interest in being sincere in acts, and professions, would the courtesies, and charms of society be abolished ? Suppose it were inculcated in the minds of the young that if they desire to be ever at peace with themselves, they must consider before they act, and avoid every act which will bring self-reproach ; would they be disqualified, by such lessons, to mingle in the affairs of the world ?

What the answers to these, and similar questions, must be, no reasonable person can doubt. It must be remembered too, that such morality, as these questions imply, does not depend on Grecian philosophy, nor on any human dictation, but comes from high and awful authority. Will it ever come to be the case, that education will elevate, even a majority of human minds, to know how to derive the greatest good from using external objects ; how to practise the best rules of life, as to one's self, and others ; or how to insure a calm, dignified self-respect under all circumstances ; or how to attain to a sincere conviction, that whatsoever concerns physical, moral, or intellectual being, refers, necessarily, to the will of a Creator ; and that nothing wrong can happen among them, when they are not wrong themselves ? We are not to despair that it will, at some time come to this, however distant from it society appears now to be.

It may be expected, that when one ventures to assume that society is in error, and can become wiser, that he should point out the cause of error, and suggest the remedy. I have but light pretensions to be able to do this. So far as I can see into this matter, it arises from the general prevalence of unsound opinions, as to worldly good ; and from the habit into which the members of society have fallen, of making *comparisons* between their own condition, and that of others. One, for example, has little satisfaction in a keen appetite, simple food, good clean raiment, a moderate and comfortable dwelling-place, furnished for usefulness and not for show, and in safe and convenient means of transportation from place to place, nor even in good health, when he is obliged to compare himself with one who dwells in a splendid mansion, adorned with pictures and statues, and who dines at a table dazzling with porcelain, silver, and gold, and on food which it has tortured ingenuity to prepare for him ; and who rides on yielding springs, seated on downy cushions. But the person who distresses himself in comparing his condition with that of his fortunate and luxurious neighbor, would be astonished to hear, that his neighbor is envying him for his supposed freedom from vexatious

care, for his tranquil industry, and well earned health. It does not seem to be the possession of riches, nor every use, nor even the most common use of them, which constitutes happiness.

For, after the common wants of nature are satisfied, if the rich have no inclination to use money for charitable purposes, or the public benefit, the pleasure of being rich must be derived from the consciousness of being thought, by the world, to be so. The real value of wealth may be tested by comparing it with knowledge. Lord Bacon, or some other wise man, says that knowledge is power. Wealth cannot buy health, but can easily lead to disease. It cannot buy knowledge, good sense, taste, good manners, or good feelings, but may, and often does, prevent the acquisition of all of them. It cannot purchase self-satisfaction, or tranquillity, but often makes one dissatisfied and painfully anxious. It does not make one independent, but often makes one a miserable slave. If a miracle could be wrought in relation to a sensible, well informed man, and a rich one who values himself only on his riches, the true value of wealth would be discerned. Suppose two such men could remain precisely in their respective conditions, as to possession and use of worldly things, but that the eyes, and ears, and tongues of the world, should become insensible as to both of them. The rich man's house would be seen, but he would not be known to be the possessor. His festivals would occur, but he would not be known to give them. His equipage would continue to glitter, but he would not be known to be the fortunate owner. He would come to the sad conclusion, that he spends his life for others, and does not live for himself. While the other man would still have his own sources of satisfaction, and come to the sound conclusion, that the world's admiration is of no worth to him. But this is not the worst of selfish wealth. One's children are necessarily habituated to consider, that the business of this life, and all that life is given for, is to be rich. They receive no instruction which qualifies them to know how riches should be used. If they inherit, and become afterwards poor, they are in a miserable state, compared with a poor man's child, who thinks it

no degradation, but a privilege, to labor in any honest vocation. There are some who think the statute of distributions is an unwise provision ; it tends, they say, *to break families down in three or four generations*. So far from being wrong, this is the very best feature in our whole system of policy. If wealth could be entailed, in such a country as this, while education continues as it is, all the inducements to be intelligent and happy would disappear from the land. The less that is thought of wealth, for its own sake, and the more that is thought of those qualities which no wealth can purchase, the better pretensions will Americans have to intelligence and happiness.

And as to other distinctions, as beauty, grace, talent of any order, eloquence, learning, ancestry, these would be of very insignificant value to the possessors, if they were deprived of the pleasure of comparing themselves with others ; and of the still higher pleasure of believing, that others regard such distinctions as proofs of happiness. And so with regard to official distinction.

The office of President of the United States may disclose to us, how it may be in many other offices, which are not sought, and taken merely to get one's daily bread. Suppose we could certainly know the pains and the pleasures which are supposed to be experienced by one who holds the office of President. Take away from him all the pleasure of knowing that he stands on a pedestal, which no one, in his whole nation, can ascend while he stands there ; and that the eyes of the world are turned to him in envy, or admiration. Bereft of this pleasure, there would be but a light balance of pleasure to console him for his anxious, perplexing, wearisome and disgusting existence.

Are we, then, to assume that in a country whose affairs must be conducted by elected officers, there will be no inducement to take office but that of making comparisons ? The number of genuine patriots who get into office and hang on to it, and quarrel for it, to the imminent hazard of ingulphing our national bark and sinking it to the bottom, leaves no room for doubt, as to inducements. Passing by these hungry, craving hosts, who prefer precarious

feeding on the public, to private independence, there have been men in our land, whose ample souls were too full of dignity, and duty, to leave any space for the entry of the poor vanity of comparison. Of such men were Washington, and John Jay. They acted towards their fellow-men, throughout their lives, knowing that they were ever in the presence of a Judge, whose wrathful indignation they never feared, nor thought of; but the consciousness of whose approbation, (whatever men might do or think,) was that sentiment which ever made retrospect grateful, and the future cheerful; and which was abundant in pleasures that left no sting. It is hoped our nation will find out, that the race of such men has not come to an end.

Are we to annihilate or banish from private society one of the most powerful of motives to action? Is one to shut his eyes upon the condition of all around him, and expect of them to do the same towards him? This would be to put an end to social relations. Comparison-making is, in itself, rightly applied, the very salt of society. Suppose that all of us were to think of riches, and distinctions as they should be thought of; and should compare ourselves with each other in profitable intellectual attainments; in habits of useful industry; in the performance of the manifold obligations as members of society; and in all those virtues, and innocent accomplishments, which adorn domestic life, and shed a satisfying pleasure on social intercourse; suppose that our public men should compare themselves with each other, in patriotic intelligence, and in seeking for themselves that self-respect, and cheering complacency, which they will earnestly desire, when the hour approaches for their final retrospect of life; and when one must think, what the living will do with the fame of the dead; why, then, if this were all so, comparison-making would be a very good thing, and this world would be relieved from no small portion of its griefs, and vexations, and become a reasonable, and satisfying place to live in.

But who can hope, in this thriving, money-making, comparison-making community, vieing in festivals, splendor, and show, that such fanciful notions can find entrance to any mind? Yet it is

firmly believed, that whatsoever we do to promote common learning, and science, our duties demand of us, still more urgently, to promote sound, rational, practical morality, among all the members of society ; for without this we have no reason to hope for individual happiness, or national security.

If the true value of a cheerful, virtuous life, were seen in domestic precept, and example ; if rational, moral teaching, conducted by gentleness and persuasion, and not by fear and terror, were found in all our seminaries, one would think the Americans might become a truly happy people, if such there can ever be. It is believed that if such teaching prevailed among us, there would not be so many sorrowful and mortifying lessons to learn after adult age has come over us. We should not waste our lives in the pursuit of objects, which cause bitter disappointments when not obtained, and which are found to be vain, and worthless, if obtained. We should not so often be distressed with the indiscretions and follies of others, nor find ourselves so often engaged in mourning over our own. We should not so often, as we now do, meet our fellow-men in business, in politics, and religion, with embittered feelings. We should not, as many are now fated to do, regard the desired gift of children, not as a cause of grateful emotion, but as a cause of inexpressible sadness. There would not be so many who daily wake to a depressing sense of present and coming evils, known to be phantoms that vanish in the light of reason ; but which still gather round one in the shades of night, and are again to be dispelled when morning comes. And when old age comes on, and the pathway seems overshadowed to the dim eye, and nothing is seen there to attract, and prompt one onward, we should tranquilly regard that which lies beyond its end, and not turn to cast ‘a longing, lingering look’ over the path that has been traced. He only has been well instructed, who can engage in this retrospect without painful emotions. Most men so engaged plainly see the good they have missed, but might have had. Most of them will be reminded of scenes, which ought to have been grateful as they passed, but which went by, little valued, and which can be known no more. Not a few trace the relics of

lovely forms, and lovelier minds, of which the worth was unperceived, while they were familiar. There are some to whom these offices of memory are truly mournful, since they are strangers to the hope, that they shall know these forms, and minds, again, when they too, shall have passed away.

There is little doubt that the means of education now are, or soon will be, fully adequate, to teaching all that need be known to acquire property. If there should be any highly desirable advancement in the character of instruction, it will be to teach *how to live, and for what to live*. I pretend to no knowledge how this great end can be accomplished. But we ought to believe, that everything which ought to be done, can be done. If this end be thought a proper one to strive for, it may be expected that it will be accomplished, if any where, in a country where no ecclesiastical or political bondage is known; and where all its citizens are at liberty to effect any good which they may desire.

A people who have the right of self-government, have duties to perform as a *nation*; and however instructed in common, and in scientific learning, however rationally religious, and purely moral, an American youth may be, he is defectively educated if he be ignorant of the political institutions of his own country, and of the rights and duties of a citizen. We see here, for the first time in the history of men, sovereignty universally diffused, and that sovereignty dependent, in the making and executing of laws, on universal suffrage.

By what means national perils, and sufferings can be averted, met, or remedied, and by what means the highest degree of security, and happiness, may be had in a nation, must depend on human agency to some extent. But the wisest agents, in the space of time in which they can exercise power, can rarely foresee all the consequences of the measures, which they may order, or accomplish.* It might be an instructive inquiry to Americans,

* It is somewhere said, that civil government is only a course of expedients; each day bringing its own evils, which, in each day, must be remedied, if they can be; and that a statesman must content himself with doing this, if he can. But this ought not to be considered so, in this country.

who have far more power to order and accomplish, for their own good, than any people have ever had, to study the course of social action, and to learn how this has been over-ruled, by the power that can order, and accomplish, throughout the long series of ages. An example may be found in the question, what the fanatical warfare, which began with the thirteenth century, had to do, with the rational liberty and equality, which are now practically known to the people of the United States? The military genius, the powers of sovereignty, the physical force, and the riches of Europe were then suddenly devoted to the remote and impracticable purpose of expelling the Saracens from the Holy Land. This was a surprising change from the desolating feudal warfare, mingled with barbarous magnificence, and abject vassalage, which had constituted, for ages, the principal elements of society. The *human* purpose, in this case, arose from a perverted and absurd sense of religious duty. The *Divine* purpose seems to have been, to change the condition of society, by giving new, and better objects of desire to the human mind. Among the unforeseen consequences of the Holy wars, as they are called, were more expanded views arising from the collisions of able minds, the enlightening and refining influences of commerce, the accidental discovery of the long forgotten, and still admirable code of Roman Law, and an ardent devotion to improving the human understanding. The paralyzing reign of the Roman Hierarchy was soon felt to be wrong, and oppressive. In this state of feeling, some men, and eminently so *Luther*, secured to themselves an enduring fame by showing the way to break from their allegiance to the Roman Church. Here the human purpose seems to have been no more, than to escape from one sort of creed and worship, to establish others, hardly preferable, and still under a despotism not less severe than that which was repelled. The Divine purpose seems to have been, however, unperceived by the agents of that day, still further to advance the knowledge of human power, duty, and welfare; and that out of the afflictive tyranny of these days, should arise, the satisfying conception, that men

can govern themselves, in their own right; and that hereditary right to rule, is unnatural and absurd. Who they were who first so conceived, and by what wonderful patience, exertion, and perseverance, this truth has become the fundamental law of our country, is the honorable distinction of American history. It may be hoped that the Divine, and the human purpose, have in our case united, and that we shall be able to prove ourselves worthy of the trust which has been thus reposed in us.

It may be said, that the Divine and the human purpose, can never accord, since the one runs through all duration of time, while the latter must be limited to a generation, or even to a day. Looking back through historical periods, this may seem to be so. Thus it may be asked, what human prescience could have given the intimation, that the present state of Europe might be, what it is now known to be; and if its liability to be, what it is, could have been discerned, what human wisdom could have made it otherwise? Could any one have foreseen, that what are called the triumphs of genius in glorious war, in science, in commerce, in manufacturing industry; or the proud honors of royalty, renowned ancestry, religious devotion, ecclesiastical dignity, and national grandeur, might, in any lapse of time, bring any nation to the verge of social dissolution, threatening to reduce all that ages have been cementing, to first elements, in a single convulsion? What a state of society must that be, in which hereditary claims, long accustomed habits, the interests, and the prejudices of priesthood, pride, character, craving want, accumulated riches, the sense of intolerable oppression, and brutal notions of liberty, are liable to mingle at any moment, in desolating conflict! Such condition may be consistent with the Divine purpose, as some better condition may come from what seems to be appalling evil; and yet, who can doubt that if human wisdom, and just regard for the future, had been, heretofore, applied, that such would not have been the state of any European people.

Is there not something touchingly monitory to us, in the mournful prospects of Europe? We often hear short-sighted philan-

thropists boast of 'the march of mind,' as they call it, and of the coming reign of republican freedom. They seem not to know, what intelligence and virtue have to do with such freedom. They shut their eyes upon the convulsive experiments already made in Europe, which have ended, as all such experiments, (in the absence of virtue and intelligence,) must end, in the terrible tranquillizer of all commotions, the power of the strongest. There is monition for us, also, in the state of South America, from which we have, by every arrival, some account of new political paroxysm; as though a party-colored, ignorant, priest-ridden population, could comprehend, and live in, republican freedom. There is still more touching monition in the state of our own country. One may almost ask, whether the experiment in republicanism, has not already failed with us; and if it has not, whether the day is not soon to come in which it must fail, if human purpose do not forthwith and wisely, pursue some other course than that to which it is now devoted.

What is that, in which the people of the United States consider themselves to be privileged, far above every other people; and to gain which a majority of all who dwell in Europe would gladly risk their lives? One knows not what it is, unless it be the right of choosing rulers from among equals. Yet, through this, which is not only a good thing politically, but the best political thing that can be, this country seems to be hurrying on to as deplorable a condition as any which is seen in Europe, or South America. How should it be otherwise? We go on, from generation to generation, as though a clear knowledge of the rights and duties of a free citizen could be had, throughout our extensive country, by some sort of inspiration. We all know, every citizen is presumed to judge of public policy, and to be able, if it be wicked or unwise, to correct it, by exercising his electoral right. Yet, there is not one youth in a thousand, even among the best educated, who ever spent an hour in studying the principles of our political and social being. It will not be denied, that nearly all our children pass from minority into citizen-

ship, and all its serious duties, without one word of instruction as to the nature of these duties, nor even that there are any such duties. If a youth observes at all what is passing in the political world, he only reads some speech, as a specimen of eloquence ; or notices some electioneering controversy, which must seem to him to be of much the same dignity as a combat among gladiators ; and if the election involve some principle of constitutional law, or of vital expediency, these lie far beyond his perception. How should he have learned, that on the conscientious exercise of electoral right, depends the welfare of himself, of all around him, and of all who are to come after him ? It never entered his head that a sacred trust will soon devolve on him, for which he will be held far more seriously accountable than he can be, for any other trust, which it may be in his power to assume.

If there be any among us who think they discern in the signs of the times, that this country is fast hastening under the dominion of factions, as audacious, and corrupt, as any ever known within the walls of Rome, surely they must feel that they have some duties to perform. If they can do nothing to arouse and inform adult age, grateful reverence to forefathers, affection for those who are of their own times, and faithfulness to coming generations, unitedly demand of them to do their best and utmost, to instruct and purify the young.

It is not supposed that education can be so universal, that every citizen who is entitled to vote, will be profoundly versed in constitutional law, or public expediency. But a large majority may be sufficiently so ; and we must depend, to some extent, on example, imitation, and sympathy.

It is as reasonable to suppose that such influences may have effect in morals, and public policy, as in the wearing of a watch chain, or the deforming fulness of a sleeve.

It is in vain to busy ourselves in bettering schools, if there be no teaching in good morals, and in the rational belief on which such morals rest ; for learning, which is not chastened by such teaching, is more likely to be mischievous, than useful. Learn

ing, however chastened, affords no assurance of happiness to a people who are so careless, or ignorant of their public affairs, that they know not whether they are ruled by honest imbecility, or skilful dishonesty.

With all the benefits from instruction which we can in any way obtain, let us not deceive ourselves in supposing, that we shall be free from all embarrassments and perils, as a nation. All thoughtful men contemplate the future of this country with fearful emotions. They cannot be unmindful of the truth, that it requires still more effort to preserve, than to acquire. We have at no time been more in want of good information, good sense, and sound judgment, than at the present. It is impossible to foresee how we shall be affected by the probable state of Europe. We have at home, absorbing interests. The perils of the last winter and spring seem to have passed harmlessly over. The causes of excitement remain. The danger of disunion is not passed. No one need now be reminded of the consequences of throwing the States into the relation which they sustained from the year 1783 to 1789.

As it is so deeply connected with the happiness of our country, and with national existence, I venture to express some opinions on one subject, which is now much considered in the Northern States, and in England. It is a subject to be regarded with the most fearful apprehensions, and which seems to be improvidently treated. The ostensible cause of nullification, as it is called, was the operation of certain laws of the National Government. It is believed that the real cause lies far deeper, and is of far graver character. Slavery is a sore evil, whether regarded as social, moral, or political. It seems to have originated in the right of victory in war, and was common among all ancient nations. The right of property in a white man gradually expired, probably under the influence of the Christian religion, in the thirteenth century. The slavery of Africans was begun by Portugal, under Royal authority, at the close of the fifteenth century; and was very soon adopted by Spain. Charles V. granted a patent in

1517, to supply 4000 negroes annually. In the seventeenth century divers companies were incorporated in England, under Royal patronage, and slaves became an article of established commerce. When the Spaniards obtained possession of South America, the natives were slaves in right of conquest, and were employed in the mines, a servitude to which they were found to be unequal. A Spanish prelate, named Las Casas, from humanity to the Indians, introduced the Africans, as the slaves of the Western world, and gave as one reason, that they would obtain the 'inestimable advantage of a knowledge of the true God, and of all the benefits of civilization.' Slavery was soon common in all the Spanish colonies, in the West-Indies; and from thence slaves were first brought, as an article of commerce, by a Dutch vessel into James River, in Virginia, soon after the settlement of the country. Shortly after they were known in all the colonies as property, and in some of the States are now so held.

Morally wrong, and politically grievous, as slavery undoubtedly is, it is not perceived that those who were born in the States, where slavery thus became incorporated with social existence, are to be reproached with its origin, or continuance; certainly not with the former; nor with the latter, unless they have the means of extirpating it. Whether it was right, or wrong, to recognise the existence of human beings as property, in establishing the union of the States, and whether any union could have been effected without that recognition, it is worse than useless to inquire. Doubtless, wisdom, foresight, and patriotism, are to be attributed to the assembly who framed the constitution, and to the representative assemblies of the people who adopted it, as much as to any that ever met. At any rate there is slavery, and the persons of the black man, and of his descendants, are regarded as property in the national confederacy. Over slaves, as such, the national government has no power of legislation, beyond the securing and restoration of slaves to owners when they are fugitives from the States in which their owners live; and also when Congress sees fit to resort to direct taxation; in which case slaves

are included with other taxable property. As each State is sovereign within its own limits, except in those respects in which the people of each State have vested powers of sovereignty in the nation, the people of one State can exercise no power over person, or property, within the limits of any other. Such are our relations, whether we like them or not ; and such they must continue to be, until changed by consent, or violence. Thus the enormous, dangerous, and revolting evil of slavery has grown up, and such some of the most enlightened men who dwell where it exists, acknowledge it to be. Under these circumstances, some persons among the humane, the moral and religious, who dwell where slavery is not, and who are mostly utter strangers to its practical operation, from personal inspection, consider themselves imperiously called on, from high motives of duty, to demand, and by all means in their power to effect, immediate and entire abolition.

Certainly, great respect is due to any class of citizens, who desire to remove a great moral evil from the land. But it is to be expected of any men, who are humane enough to contemplate a great moral improvement, that they will be just enough to consider whether they have a right to interfere ; and prudent enough to foresee whether their own purposes are practicable ; and wise enough to weigh consequences, if they could do as they would. It might be expected that the condition of the black man, who is the object of this benevolence, would be duly regarded, if that of the white man may be disregarded. One would expect well digested plans, and a series of measures, leading to their accomplishment. No such plans and measures are presented to public notice. Nothing is heard of, but a declaration that slavery is morally wrong, it must forthwith be abolished, and consequences must be left to God. Suppose a cancer had been engendered in the human system, and were extending and associating itself with the great organs on which vital action depends, what should we think of one who should thrust himself into the councils of the diseased party, and insist on tearing the cancer out by violence, and that the consequences might be left to God ?

Immediate and general manumission of the blacks, in their wholly unprepared state for such a change, would make them the most miserable beings on the face of the earth ; a change which they would shudder at, if they could be made to comprehend it. What a phenomenon would it be in social and political life, to have one sixth part of the whole population of a country, neither aliens, subjects, citizens, nor slaves, and who must become familiar with miseries unknown to any slaves.

But the condition of the white man cannot be disregarded. The inhabitants of the Southern States are our fellow-citizens. They have united with us in forming a political and social system. They, and ourselves, are living under it. If it is good for anything it is good for the preservation of internal peace ; for the protection of property, and the lives of those who are bound together by domestic ties. Who in the South, or here, or anywhere, will regard the Union as standing before these, or as standing at all, but for the security of these, and that they may be enjoyed. No prudent, rational man, however sensitive to the impulses of humanity, will set at naught the most powerful motives that can be known to the human heart.

Slavery, it is believed, will be abolished, if not unwisely interfered with, in non-slaveholding States. Many of our fellow-citizens in the South are thoroughly awakened to the evils of their condition, and to the probable, if not inevitable consequences in the course of time. This is unavoidably their affair, and not that, either by right or duty, of those who dwell in non-slaveholding States. We owe to our fellow-citizens of the South, our sympathy and co-operation when they ask for them. It is for them to lead, and for us to follow. Motives far more urgent than any which mere humanity and supposed moral or religious duty can suggest, will carry on the process of manumission, as far and as fast as the welfare of the slaves themselves could justify, even if that were the only motive. Emancipation must be gradual ; it must proceed under legislative and executive authority. It may demand the highest wisdom, and all the resources of our

nation. At all events, it is certain that northern interference can do no possible good, and may do incalculable mischief. For if we permit our feelings here (for surely it cannot be called our judgment) to dictate in a matter of such exceeding delicacy and intrinsic difficulty, as hitherto to have baffled the best efforts of the wisest and best men, we must prepare to see the end of the Union; and we must forthwith employ ourselves to educate our children to meet the consequences. Among the lectures read at some future, but not very distant anniversary of this Institute, may be some on the best modes of managing, and disciplining *military schools*.*

The colonization of blacks in Africa, and the civilization of Africa itself, are subjects of entirely different character. Both of them may be considered as having no connexion with the final extirpation of slavery; and so considered are to be compared with duties which one owes to his own country, and are to be estimated accordingly. If one perform all these duties, he may then think of Africa. It is not perceived that the peace or happiness of our nation is likely to be impaired or promoted by the prosecution of either of these objects, however interesting they may be to some of our fellow citizens.

In contemplating the future, the question of slavery is not the only subject which excites lively interest, and suggests inquiry into the duties which we owe to ourselves, our children, and to posterity.

As every thing human which is best, is liable to worst perversion, a country which has perfect political and religious freedom, must

* There is good reason to believe, that Maryland does seriously contemplate the extirpation of slavery, by gradual colonization; and that the same purpose engages the attention of some of the most enlightened men in Virginia. But in both these States *northern interference* is looked upon with great displeasure. Further south such interference is felt with unqualified indignation. The convictions which prevail in Maryland do not arise from what has been done in the north, nor do they in Virginia. Very different causes may be assigned. If such convictions do not travel southward, the principal reason will be the deep resentment there felt, for the indiscreet intermeddling of northern philanthropists.

expect to encounter the most dangerous abuses. We shall have 'friends of the people' as though there could be *enemies* of the people, where every male adult must be one of the people. We shall hear taking popular phrases, which though they mean nothing, confer like Greek apothegms, immortality on the inventers. We shall have patriots, who like Swiss soldiery, are faithful to the last drop, to the power that pays best. For real republicanism we shall have parties, in which gifted leaders inspire all the zeal, and command all the effort, which belong to honest patriotism. We shall have politicians who think the sober trust of ruling a free community, is a mere game in which he may win most, who plays deepest, with the most skill, and with the least honor. For the practical and pure doctrines of enlightened Christianity, we shall have form and sound, which leave the mind and heart in the same dull night in which they found them, and terrified by the darkness which they have made visible. We shall have wretches, who though they can look abroad on this wonderful universe, and inwardly on the action of their own immortal spirit, try to say to themselves, *there is no GOD*.

How are these liabilities to abuse to be met, and counteracted? In no way but by performing the sacred and beneficent trust which our Creator has reposed in us; and especially by taking the pure soil of early youth, and making that to yield as we know it can do. But why should any one task himself with this irksome labor? Because, there must come to every mortal, who is not a fool, or whose soul has not lost all sense in the tanning of iniquity, an hour, in which he must ask, and answer the question, *Why was life given to me, and how have I spent it?*

It may be thought that more has been said to excite apprehension, and to produce discouragement, than the present and probable state of the country can justify. To those who think so, there are many cheering and welcome objects to encourage them; and none more so than the American Institute of Instruction. Though but of recent origin, it has already been an example. It commands the attention and the respect of the intelligent, the virtuous and the learned. All the inducements which arise from love of

country, from reasonable self-love, and from the best sort of the latter, when shown in proper knowledge of the best interests of the young, unite to sustain us. We must labor, it is true, but such labor is pleasant, honorable, and profitable, though it may not be the latter, as to this world's goods. There is encouragement too, in the increasing moral feeling of society. The respect for temperance, which is finding its way among all classes, is a remarkable and grateful circumstance, in the character of the times ; and the more so, that it is not the consequence of force, or unnatural means, but of reason, and good sense. There is another fact which is full of delightful hope, and even of assurance, in the interest which the YOUNG MEN are taking, in the promotion of the welfare of society. The last celebration of national independence, in this city, was the least ostentatious, the least devoted to the senses, and the most devoted to the mind, and heart, of any which has occurred. Eleven different societies, composed entirely of young men associated for the worthiest purposes, united to do just honor to the birth-day of their nation, and to the various objects which they respectively cherish. An Address was delivered* before these assembled fraternities, abounding in sentiments worthy of the day, and of any assembly, who desire that society shall grow wiser, and better. This is a striking and grateful event. It assures us, that we shall not outrun the public sentiment in attempting to mingle, in the ordinary course of instruction, any teaching which raises the dignity of man ; and which enables the young to carry from schools, into manhood, the principles of action which make good men ; and the knowledge and firmness which qualify them to preserve the best institutions which good and wise men have ever established.

Gentlemen of this Institute : permit me to close this humble

* The address was by *Mr Amasa Walker*. The Societies were these. 1. The Young men's Marine Bible Society. 2. Boston Young men's Society. 3. Young men's Society for the promotion of Literature and Science. 4. Franklin Debating Society. 5. Boston Laboring young men's Temperance Society. 6. Lyceum, Elocution and Debating Society. 7. Mercantile Library Association. 8. Boston Lyceum. 9. Young men's Temperance Society. 10. Mechanics Lyceum.

tribute to the common cause, by expressing the hope, that the freedom and plainness with which I have spoken, will not be attributed to any unkind or disrespectful motive. It did not seem to me to be an occasion on which one should sacrifice to the gods, as was the custom with one Grecian orator, that he might say only what was flattering to his audience; but one in which a speaker should try to set forth the truth, according to the best of his knowledge, and belief. Allow me, at least, the gratification of feeling assured, that in taking the serious responsibility of addressing you, I have manifested a heart-felt respect for a meritorious order of men, who have devoted their lives to the arduous service of forming moral, religious, and political members of society out of the young: a numerous class continually renewing, on whom the hope of human happiness depends. Permit me to offer congratulation, that you live, and labor, in an age, when the usefulness of the instructor is fast rising in rank, in the opinion of a judicious and generous community.

The often repeated maxim that a republic must depend on virtue and intelligence for its being, begins to be properly valued. These qualities, if limited to a *few*, will do but little towards upholding any republic. We cannot retire from the ground taken, that this country can be, and shall be, rationally, civilly and in religion, *free*. We cannot retreat from the experiment, in popular government, on which all that is valuable in the country, and the country itself must stand or fall. The wealthy are beginning to realize that if they would preserve and enjoy, they must give their percentage to promote virtue and intelligence. Talents and learning must make their patriotic contributions. Wealth, talent, and learning must study the profitable lesson, that if they would purchase for themselves the pleasures of respect and esteem, they must be diligent in promoting the general welfare, and not content themselves with hollow praises which sound over the dead, in obituary notices, and funeral sermons.

May you, Gentlemen, be worthily and honorably sustained, in doing your important part, towards making just, and strong minds, and pure and amiable hearts throughout a fortunate and happy land.

NOTE.

It appears from the August number (1833) of the Annals of Education, (edited by a gentleman whose exertions in the cause of Education are indefatigable) that the want of instruction in the United States, is a subject of alarming interest. The table published by him, shows, that the number of persons in 1830, above fifty years of age, was about one in twelve; while the number under twenty, exceeds half the population; and that the number under fifteen, exceeds one third. It further shows, that the whole number of children, exclusive of those in New England and New York, is 1,840,000, of whom only one third receive *any schooling*. This editor (who may be presumed to speak from knowledge) considers many schools, even at the north, as 'utterly unfitted to improve the mind, or cultivate the heart.' Taking these as facts, and considering what is implied in the qualifications of citizens, who are to sustain and transmit free popular government, the United States are in imminent danger of losing the fame of having 'the most enlightened people on earth.'

To the number of those who receive no schooling, add those who receive some instruction, but none whatever in the duties of citizens, and who know nothing of the dignity of free citizenship, what reasonable man can expect that our present political institutions can be of long duration? It is historically true, that every people have as good and free a government as they are capable of living under. Ignorance and superstition make ever the best materials for despotism. The first steps towards despotism of the sword, is despotism over the mind. We are permitting, by neglect of instruction, abundant materials for the first kind of despotism. If there be some among the instructed who are

destitute of moral sense, and who can effect and move such materials to their own purposes, what good will it do for the wise and well principled to speak to those who have no ears to hear them?

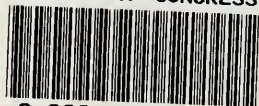
When such suggestions are made, the common answer is, *Providence will take care of us*. Providence takes care of those who take care of themselves. The motto of divers societies in a transatlantic country is, *Aide toi, et le Ciel t'aidera*—(Help yourself and providence will help you.) This was the maxim of our forefathers. They trusted in Providence most sincerely and devoutly, in considering, pursuing and accomplishing their settlement in this country; but they did everything, for themselves, that men could do. Their successors inculcated and manifested the same dependence, but they did all that the strength of body and mind can do to gain, protect and preserve; and *their descendants are free*.

At this day Americans are precisely at the moment of peril. The memory of colonial dependence is gone. The sentiment of acquired freedom is not a daily, constant one. It requires an effort and a course of reasoning, to feel it. Liberty is spoken of—but what ideas are suggested by this word? More probably the liberty to do just what one chooses to do, than the liberty to do what the laws of the country and of society permit, which is the only civil liberty that society can have. How, then, can we hope to maintain civil liberty if we do nothing to teach what civil liberty is? The first step towards such teaching is but little attended to, taking the whole of the young population into view. What is the remedy? It is supposed to be this: The legislatures of the several states have power to do all that the exigency of the country demands. Legislatures do whatsoever they believe constituents will approve. The first step, therefore, is to awaken the general attention to the interests of education; and to make the truth felt, that *no money, public or private, is so well laid out as that, which goes for GENERAL instruction*. Why *general* instruction? Because the most wise, eloquent and honest, are powerless in a country that rules by universal suffrage, unless they speak to those who can understand. So, what avails it, if there be some who are moral, virtuous and exemplary, if a majority of citizens are unable to comprehend the value of such qualities? *Thus, education is not a concern of a few privileged persons, but of all persons.*





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